

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Rep. Mazie K. Hirono Votes for Largest Investment  
in Higher Education Since the GI Bill**

Education bill includes incentives for early education teachers

WASHINGTON, D.C.---Rep. Mazie K. Hirono today voted for a bill that will make the single largest investment in higher education since the GI bill, at no cost to taxpayers. The College Cost Reduction Act of 2007 passed out of the House Education and Labor Committee by a vote of 30 to 16. Rep. Hirono is a member of the Committee.

The bill would increase college financial aid by nearly \$20 billion over the next five years by cutting interest rates on student loans, increasing and expanding grants for students with financial needs, and providing loan forgiveness as an incentive to begin a career in public service.

The bill also includes the initiative Rep. Hirono introduced on Monday via the Early Childhood Educator Loan Forgiveness Act of 2007. It provides substantial loan forgiveness to people who earn a degree in early childhood education and go to work in a preschool or child care center in a low income community. The College Cost Reduction Act of 2007 provides \$1,000 toward loan forgiveness for each of the first five years of work in an eligible school or center. It also provides complete loan forgiveness after 10 years of work.

“Scientists, economists, teachers, and parents tell us that we must invest in our country’s future by funding increased access to high quality early childhood education,” Rep. Hirono said. “In most states, including Hawaii, there are not enough qualified early education teachers to provide opportunities for every child. This is largely due to the substantial economic barriers to earning a B.A., which often leaves the graduate with thousands of dollars of debt. This debt makes it hard to enter a field in which she or he will earn less than many workers with only a high school degree. As recent graduates see it, these numbers just don’t add up. This bill will take an important first step to solve this problem,” said Rep. Hirono.

The College Cost Reduction Act includes other incentives to encourage public service. It includes loan forgiveness for first responders, law enforcement officers, firefighters, nurses, public defenders, librarians, and others.

Rep. Hirono estimates Hawaii students and families would receive more than \$33 million over five years in additional benefits for student loans, and allows nearly 15-hundred more students to qualify for financial assistance under the Pell Grant.

The bill would boost investment in education without adding cost to taxpayers by cutting excess subsidies paid by the federal government to the largest private lenders in the student loan industry.

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